

GRACE IN THE WILDERNESS

A MINISTRY FOR TODAY'S BUSY WOMAN



I WILL EVEN MAKE A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS, AND RIVERS IN THE DESERT - ISAIAH 43:19



How Do You Eat An Elephant?

By Sharon Hawkins

You must be wondering to yourself, "What kind of question is that?" and "What does eating an elephant have to do with being a busy woman of today?" Well, just everything!!!

Any huge project, problem or trial is an elephant of sorts and let's face it, Today's Busy Woman lives in a wilderness with stampeding obstacles and trials of "pachydermic" proportion. She does have a choice of whether or not to take on some of the elephants... What about that project to start the business she's always dreamed of? What about that diet that she needs to go on to lose 25 lbs. or more? Create a budget? Paint a room? If the project seems too big, often she doesn't take the first bite.

But what about the ones that don't give her a choice—her trials. Forget taking a bite, she's just trying not to get stepped on! Some of her elephants can be overwhelming..., overpowering..., even Mammoths. When faced with eating such huge elephants, she doesn't even know where to begin. With the tail? Too hairy. With the trunk? Too tough. With the belly? It ain't happening!

When life seems overwhelming, Today's Busy Woman often wonders how she'll overcome. In John 16:33, Christ gives us hope and helps us face our trials. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you

will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." What hope! What a promise!

One day, a huge Elephant stampeded right up to Grace Ankles, Today's Busy Woman, demanding to be eaten. Her husband had been told he would be out of a job unless he was willing to relocate to a city 600 miles away to work. This burden was so big and heavy that she couldn't even begin to see how they could bite it off much less chew it. What about her kids' school? Their friends? What about her parents who needed her? What about her job? Their house? Their obligations? Their life?

People are always saying that God doesn't give us more than we can handle. I've searched my Bible and haven't found where it says that exactly (*gotta ask my pastor*). But what I did find is in 1 Corinthians 10:13. "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. But when you are tempted, He will provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." God gives us a way out when we're tempted. But He also gives us a way out when we're burdened, when we face problems, obstacles and even "elephants" way bigger than we are. **HE'S THE ANSWER!!** And we need Him.

Sometimes, does He give us more than we can handle on our own so we'll learn to give it to Him? The Bible is full of great stories of how God helped others do things they couldn't possibly have done on their own... slay a giant, outrun Pharaoh's Army across the parted Red Sea, share a small lunch with 5,000, survive a den of hungry lions, live through a fiery furnace, and escape the stomach of a huge fish, just to name a few. There's help for conquering the elephants in our lives too! When God gives us grace, it's for today, tomorrow and forever!! Psalm 46:1 says, God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. There's only one thing He can't do and that is fail us!!

I'm so glad He's always there for His children but we have to do our part. Sometimes that means He wants us to step out in faith—take the first bite. St. Francis of Assisi once said, "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

In recent weeks, a gigantic elephant marched into my life, one that is so big, there's no way this girl can slay it on her own. It's called breast cancer. Please pray for me as I begin this battle that so many brave, amazing women have fought and are fighting.

So, How Do You Eat An Elephant? Only with God's help... One Bite At A Time!!

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*Watch for our
Grace In The
Wilderness
Conference for
Teens and College
Age Girls
October, 2011
Blue Ridge View
Baptist Church*

Romans 8:36-37

*As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through Him who loved us.*



Financially Speaking...

By Diana Kilgore

We have often heard it said that, "Money is the root of all evil" however, those grounded in the Word are quick to correct that, "The love of money is the root of all evil" as we're told in I Timothy 6:10. Though the mind is familiar with Scripture, what about the heart?

Just look at the music industry and how money has been viewed and portrayed to the public – "Money, Money, Money" by Abba, "The Power of Money" by Huey Lewis & The News, "Material Girl" by Madonna, "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend" by Marilyn Monroe, "Money Talks" by ACDC, "Money Changes Everything" by Cyndi Lauper, and "The Gambler" by Kenny Rogers.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us "the Word of God is...a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Do we give our tithes and offerings to the Lord? If so, what is our intent? To be seen of men (Matt. 23:5)? To merely fulfill our duty or obey a commandment? OR to honor and glorify God while helping our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ as Paul shares in 1 Cor. 8:1-5?

About two hundred years ago a young man left his home at the age of sixteen to seek his fortune. Everything he owned was tied in a bundle that he carried in his hand. But as he walked along on his way to the city, he met an old neighbor, the captain of a canal boat, and the words the old man spoke to him on that day stayed with him his entire life. The captain asked where the young man was going. The young man shared

that he didn't know but his father was too poor to keep him at home any longer and had told the boy it was time for him to make a living for himself. The young man also shared that he had no skills and didn't know how to do anything but make soap and candles. There in the pathway, the two of them, the teenager and the old man, knelt down and the old man prayed earnestly for the boy. Then, rising up, the captain said this: "Someone will soon be the leading soap maker in New York City. It can be you as well as anyone. I hope it may. Be a good man; give your heart to Christ; give the Lord all that belongs to Him of every dollar you earn; make an honest soap; give a full pound; and I am certain you will yet be a prosperous and rich man."

When the young man arrived in New York, he had trouble finding a job, but he followed the captain's advice. He dedicated himself to Christ, joined a church and began worshipping there. The first thing he did with the first dollar he earned was give 10 percent of it to the Lord's work. From that point on, he considered ten cents of every dollar as sacred to the Lord. In fact, he began giving 20 percent of his income to the Lord, and then he raised it to 30 percent, then to 40 percent, then to 50 percent. Late in his life, he had become so successful that he devoted the whole of his yearly income, 100 percent of it, to the Lord.

Today, this very morning, many of us brushed our teeth or washed our faces with products from this young man's factory. Yes, young William Colgate heeded the advice of the captain and today the Colgate-Palmolive Company is one of the

oldest and largest in America.

Long before David committed the act of adultery, he had committed it in his heart. In Psalm 51:4, David confesses his sin and shares from his heart that "against thee, thee only, have I sinned." It is the same scenario with how we handle money. Whether we choose to tithe, make charitable contributions, help the destitute on the street corner, or just go shopping, we have made the decision in our hearts.

Although William Colgate may have written his tithe checks to his local church, notice that he gave "to the Lord." Our tithe belongs to the Lord and should be given to our local church to further its ministry; however, when we give our offerings or donations, are they "to the Lord" or do we stipulate their use. Giving with guidelines is not really giving at all. Have you ever dropped five or ten dollars in the can for the homeless man in downtown Greenville and later found out he purchased cigarettes with it? What about the hundred dollars you gave your coworker to pay her electric bill but she used instead for a manicure? What was your response? Hmmm? Let's give "to the Lord" and trust Him enough to handle how the funds are spent.

2 Corinthians 9:7
Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.



Titus 2 Wisdom for Women: New Every Morning

By Celeste Hebert

As the sun creeps into my window I get up, read, study God's Word and pray. No matter where I am, Africa, South Carolina or Canada, if I hear God's voice early each morning, His Words are a comfort then and a guide throughout the day. Whether I'm staying in a busy African household or living by myself, I'm awake before others for an alone time with my Lord.

Sitting on a wooden bench in the tropics, a rock in the cow pasture or a cushioned chair, it's good to be with the Lord first

thing each morning. I may not get my coffee if I've passed the night in the African bush, but there are other enjoyments. The beautiful African sunrise is a joy to see and waving to folks marching off to their farms is another pleasure.

First things must come first. "Forgive me Lord for my selfishness, lack of devotion, misuse of time, impatience and thoughtlessness."

And then other problems aren't as serious. The calamities of the previous day aren't so terrible. The illnesses of family members aren't as ominous. Broken vehi-

cles, appliances and furniture don't appear in as bad of shape. The news isn't so gloomy. The environment not so polluted. Finances seem better. The aches and pains aren't so bad.

Everything seems and feels so much better in the morning.

Either tossing and turning on a lumpy, husk-filled mattress and rock pillow, or passing the night on a deluxe bed, I wake and say, "Good morning Lord."

Whether the night was spent in an air-conditioned room or a rat-infested, mud

mud house, I say, "Thanks Lord for another day."

If I've been bitten by fleas, bedbugs or mosquitoes throughout the nighttime or whether I've had a pleasant sleep with blissful dreams I can still thank God for the day.

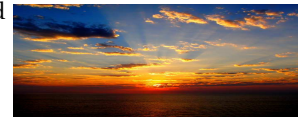
Starting each day with the Lord makes

it go so much better.

Lamentations 3:22-26 "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, The Lord is my portion, therefore I will wait for him. The Lord is good to those whose hope is in

him, it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

And with his salvation, hope and help each morning the rest of the day is bound to go better and smoother.



Prison

By JoAnn Case

His face is indelibly burned into my memory. The deep pain in his eyes pulled me in. As I watched the looks of horror cross the faces of each team member, I realized that something incredible was about to unfold. The beige puffy and wide marking across his upper back, very near the spine was infection.....oozing, smelly infection. Reminiscent of our image of sin, it left you with the feeling of hopelessness and despair. As the Doctor quickly summed up the situation, the rest of us began to pray as silent tears began to run down my face. A gunshot wound. Of all possible injuries to run across in a makeshift medical clinic in a far away land more than half way around the world, it's a gunshot wound. How ironic. The very thing that killed him, I now stand by watching as the Doctor begins to work. How interesting - in a prison. He came to set the captives free!

Details began to unfold. He was shot two weeks ago while breaking into a building. The makeshift X style stitches stretch in three large marks over the gaping wound. The Doctor begins the painstaking work of cleaning out the wound. First a little Novocain is injected around the edges. Rick hands the young man a Bible as he grimaces at the pain. He places both hands around the Bible and bears down to lessen the pain. The missionary takes off for town to pick up basic supplies to finish the job. Over the next 30 minutes, we all end up with watered up eyes or tears. I know my team mates are also whispering prayers for me as they know the thoughts and images that are running through my mind. The young man silently watches us and concentrates on his pain. The Doctor pulls out scissors and begins to trim away dead strings of skin and pours a disinfecting solution on the now open wound. He then begins to sew up the wound as our pastor places gauze over the wound to hold it together and wipes

away the blood as it begins to spill over. He willingly becomes a surprised attendee to the surgery before him.

We have 10 minutes before the guards receive their break. The other prisoners sit outside and shift to see the work of the doctor. Luckily, the young man has his back to the crowd. Only two of us are witness to his face....the look of fear mixed with relief. The missionary quickly tells us to go outside and give our testimonies to the prisoners awaiting treatment. About that time, the guards start sending everyone back to the barracks. Someone dictates that the last few guys can wait and receive treatment for skin rashes, pain and vitamin deficiencies....the typical treatments in such a clinic. We quickly ask and are then allowed to stand outside the barred open windowed barracks and share.

As I tentatively and prayerfully start through a young interpreter named Lucky, I tell the young men ranging in age from 14 or so to around 50 that when I saw the gunshot wound, I began to cry. The reason is my husband was murdered and died of a gunshot wound. I tell them of the forgiveness the Lord allowed me to extend to the man responsible for his death. I tell them of John's struggles with alcohol and how it ultimately played a role in his death. I tell them of the love of Christ and of His acceptance of us if we are willing to repent and turn to Him. I tell them of the life-long suffering that John endured and how Christ did make a difference in his life. I tell them that John is in a much better place and no longer struggles with sin. As I remember the passage in Psalms 66 that I studied for a month before traveling to Cambodia, I share that sometimes the Lord brings you to prison, puts burdens on your back and allows men to walk over you so that he can bring you to an abundant place.

I make sure that I make eye contact

with those in the crowd as I feel it is important for them to know that I care enough to look into their faces. They quietly and hopefully listen. As I speak, the young man that I later learned was named Sankel, has quietly joined the crowd. When I ask if anyone has questions, one young man stands up and asks, "What do I need to do to go to Heaven? The tears begin to stream down my face again. Rick begins to share the gospel with the men. At the invitation to accept Christ, one young man steps forward and as we finish praying, hands rise up all over the two story building with a total of eight open windows when we ask who prayed that prayer. As I look up, Sankel is smiling and the look in his eyes is different - no longer pained and hollow, but filled with love and hope! I finish by telling them that the Bible says that when one person repents and turns that all of Heaven celebrates. John is among those celebrating and that means his death was not in vain. The Lord has truly brought many of these young men to an abundant place in relationship with Him.

The Doctor tells us on the way home that had we not shown up, that young man would not have lived. Just like the Great Physician, the Doctor skillfully handled the situation that came to him along the way and made an eternal difference in the life of many. The wound is now clean and antibiotics will finish the healing. Now the young man also has eternal life and life more abundant and free because his sins have been cleansed. Praise to God! Something incredible has and will continue to unfold!

Isaiah 61:1

...He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.



The ABC's of Becoming a Christian

By Sharon Hawkins

Do you know where you will go when you die? Are you tired of trying to endure the hardships of life on your own? Do you feel an emptiness that nothing fills no matter how hard you've tried?

Today, you can be sure that you're going to heaven. You can have your heavy burdens carried by the One who holds the world and hangs the stars. And you can fill that emptiness once and for all with the only One who can—Jesus. How? Well, it's as simple as **A-B-C...**

A-Admit: Romans 3:23 tells us that all of us have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God. If you were born into this world, you are a sinner. Even if you are a good person, you fall short. We all need the grace of God. We can't make it to heaven without His grace! So the first step is admitting you need God's grace! (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:10; Acts 3:19)

B-Believe: Believe that Jesus is God's

Son and that God sent Jesus to save people from their sins. To truly believe in Him, you must believe He died on a cross just for you to personally remove the sin that separates you from God. Jesus loved you when He was nailed to a cross and you weren't even born yet, but He was thinking of you! (Romans 5:8; Acts 4:12; John 3:16; 1 Peter 3:18; John 14:16)

C-Confess: Confess you want Jesus to be the Lord of your life and commit your life to Him. Trust Him to be your Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13; Matthew 16:24; Luke 9:23)

Pray this prayer: "Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I've done so many things against You. I need Your grace. I believe that You are God's Son and that You died for me to save me from my sins. Please come into my heart now and be my personal Lord and Savior. I want you to be the Lord of my life and I commit my life to serving you. Amen"

Next Steps:

1. Read your Bible Daily. The Book of John shows the love of Jesus and is a good place to start.
2. Pray for yourself and others on a daily basis. Prayer helps to build your faith.
3. Find a Bible-believing church and become a part of its family so you can grow and learn.
4. Surround yourself with Christian friends to help build you up and help you grow.

If Grace In The Wilderness Ministries can help you in any way to get started as a new Christian or if you have questions about how to be absolutely certain of your salvation, please don't hesitate to call us at (864) 380-2358. We'd love to hear that you've made this most important decision of your lifetime. You'll never regret it!!!

You Are Exactly Where You're Supposed To Be

By Cathy McCormick

Now there's a hard idea to swallow. Sitting here grieving the loss of my husband, wondering what I'm supposed to do with my life now ... it's very hard to believe that I am exactly where I am supposed to be.

I bet the same is true for you. What life situation are you dealing with right now that is creating resistance and fear? Is it your health? Is it your relationship? Is it your job? Is it your finances?

Except for exquisite moments in time, we all face life challenges that leave us questioning the purpose of our life. It is said that acceptance is the first step to understanding. If so, then I think the first step in facing life's challenges is to accept that there is a Divine reason for every challenge, a Divine reason for our being exactly where we are.

Our faith in Christ gives us a place to stand and be safe. Because I know that I am a blessed child of God, I am able to stand quietly in any given moment and breathe in the safety and strength of that fact.

Try this the next time you are feeling totally overwhelmed by a life challenge. Stop everything just for a moment. Stop spinning scenarios of gloom and doom. Stop trying to control and predict the

outcome. **Just stop, be quiet and close your eyes.** In that quiet moment, whisper the following to yourself: "I am a child of God and I am safe and loved and guided by His love that flows through me." Now take a deep, deep breath and slowly exhale. I promise you that the next moment will be different.

When you open your eyes the same life challenges will still be there. However, what will be different is your awareness that you are not doomed, you are not lost, and you are not hopeless. In that moment of stillness you connect to God and you are re-charged with His love and grace. You're now ready and able to see differently.

Now you're ready to stop "seeing" and to start feeling the very nature of life – the nature of change. Every problem, every challenge is just another opportunity for us to evolve and change with the seasons. It's such a natural process if we don't resist it. It is true that "To everything there is a season;" the question is how we perceive the seasons of our life – the never-ending changing of form and circumstance.

As we all know, how we perceive something is how we define it. The glass is always both half-full and half-empty at

the same time. It's our choice how we choose to see. God gave us the eyes to see, but it's up to each of us to choose what we see. I'm not talking about a Pollyanna approach to the world. No, I'm talking about seeing the world through eyes grounded in faith – the faith that God is watching out for you and that God is constantly leading you to your higher good.

The challenge at moments of not understanding what's happening, at moments when you are overwhelmed by the uncertainty of it all, is to not allow yourself to get caught up in the shoulda's, woulda's, coulda's. Negative thinking, the thinking called the "critical parent," is damaging and nonproductive. The parent we should be tapping into and listening to is God who loves us always and is always encouraging us to move on with faith and light in our hearts. This is the parent who provides unconditional love and truly understands that we are all pilgrims on the path of spiritual growth.

God is our rock ... when we stand firmly upon Him, we are comfortable in the fact that we may not understand WHY we are in a particular place, but we know within our core, that God does. And all is well.



Facing the Giants

By Marie Pritchett

A dark cloud of fear hung over the Israelites as the nine foot evil giant, Goliath spewed threats at the terrified group. For forty long days, Goliath had taunted them with promises of destruction. The Israelites had given up hope and were awaiting their fate at the hands of this Philistine monster.

But, on day forty-one, God had other plans. A young, handsome teenager named David refused to cower down to Goliath's threats. Instead, he chose to believe what God had placed in his heart and this monstrous giant was going down!!! David not only faced Goliath that day but he was in the presence of God Himself. Despite the doubts of his own people, David pushed his fears aside, responded to God's call on his life and fought like a mighty warrior.

What giants are you facing today? Have you lost your job and are facing an uncertain future? Is the child you love more than life itself making bad choices? Did your husband of 25 years walk out on you and your children for a younger

woman? Has a doctor just confirmed a cancer diagnoses in you or someone you love? Have you lost a precious family member? Are you dealing with depression? Our lives are sometimes filled with heartaches and fear of the unknown. As each new challenge enters our lives the last thing we want to do is "fight the giant." A lot of times we simply want to "wallow down in the mud of self-pity." We may feel hurt, anger or defeat before the battle has ever begun.

But dear sisters, nothing that happens in our lives is a surprise to God. He has already been where we are going. For that reason alone, we can face every day with hope, knowing that we never have to face a battle alone. Just like on the day David met the giant, we have God fighting for us. I have always heard "God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called." This is so true. It is not God's plan for us to go into battle alone or to live in fear. God has already laid out a plan to defeat every giant we will ever face. It is our responsibility to step out in faith and let God take care of the rest.

On the days when fear, uncertainty or even negativity threatens to take you down you must take active steps to arm yourself. Begin by starting each day with the armor of God; the shoes of peace, the belt of truth, the shield of faith, the sword of His word, the armor of righteousness and the helmet of salvation. Memorize scripture. This will strengthen you when you are weak. Finally, surround yourself with godly people who will lift you up and encourage you. (Remember to also encourage others along the way. You never know what someone is going through)

Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. Determine right now to face each day with the memory of David's defeat over Goliath and trust in Almighty God, the Giant Killer. With God, we have nothing to fear!!!

2 Timothy 1:7
For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and of a sound mind.



Learning to Listen When God Speaks

By Lisa Phillips



When I was a little girl I knew I wanted to be a nurse someday and never doubted myself. As life would have it, I eventually enrolled in school and became a nurse. I always had an idea of what nursing was about, I wanted to make all my patients feel better and feel good about myself at the end of the day knowing I had given it my all. Although I could not make every patient feel better, I felt good at the end of the day knowing I had given it my all.

In 2001, I went to work in a pediatric unit and fell in love and never wanted to leave those precious children and families. I felt blessed to work with such angels and thought many times how could life get any better?....

A few months later I was assigned a patient that was a tiny preemie baby that had multiple problems. This little man had so many diagnoses that, when laying my eyes on him, I thought "how

can this baby survive all this?" As I sat and read his chart, I could not believe the words I read. This tiny baby who had less than a 30% chance of survival was also a victim of neglect....This baby was in DSS custody and would be alone while a patient with us.

Time passed and the little fellow seemed to make great progress but he was on my mind constantly, and I could not understand why. I bought him clothing, held him while at work, fed him, talked to him, but yet I felt it just was not enough. But what? How could I do more? I was being a great nurse and doing my duty. Then one night while lying in bed my answers began to come to me; this little baby was coming to live with me and I needed to get prepared. WHAT?

I had a teenage daughter and the anticipation of regaining some independence was immense. I was not looking to start over so this must be a passing feeling that would soon go away. I could not have been more wrong, the feeling never

went away; it was getting stronger by the day.

I thought I had it all figured out and I had my own plans for my future; well God spoke and finally I listened. That precious tiny little baby is now 9 and blesses my heart daily. He has overcome all the physical problems he had as an infant and is now almost completely developmentally age appropriate.

You see I thought being a nurse was all my idea and I was doing what I loved, but all of this was God's plan. He made me a nurse, he put me in the pediatric unit, he put that baby in my life, and he blessed me with more love than I could ever imagine and it is because I finally learned to listen when God speaks.

John 10:27
My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.





Downward I Fall

By Brenda Horne

The alarm was going off, 6:30 a.m. Time to get up but instead I hit the off button and just laid there.

I didn't get up to fix breakfast, I didn't get my girls ready for school, I didn't talk to my husband. All I wanted to do was lay in bed. Satan had pushed me over the edge and I was falling. As I lay in bed, my mind floundered through the air, every aspect of my life was wildly out of control and I was quickly, descending into depression and despair.

My husband didn't say a word; he just got the girls ready and took them to school. It was now 8:30 a.m. I pulled the covers tight to me and stared at the ceiling. I was angry with the mess my life was in.

When my husband returned from taking the girls, I decided to crawl out of bed. Rage and fury filled my heart as I dressed. Our life was too hard, the things we face were not fair and I hated fighting the constant battle of life. My husband listened intently at the bitterness I spewed. We started discussing the hardships we face with parenting, finances, marriage and ... life. We dis-

cussed the attack Satan had on our lives and how difficult times can be. How it feels like we don't have time to catch our breath before another wave hits.

Then he said something completely against my contrary thoughts. He said, "But no matter what we face, either we trust God or we don't. There is no middle ground." I paused for a moment and let that truth resonate in my heart.

Then something strange happened. He and I started listing each problem we deal with. Then we started looking for something positive with each situation. Some may have been small positives but they were there none the less.

Slowly, my hardened heart turned to God and I became grateful for the positive things He had done. Yes, we have physical issues but today, right now, the pain is gone. Yes, our business is in dire straits and we do not know what the future holds, but we do know that God holds our future. There were many other problems we hashed over and with each one we thanked the Lord for His loving kindness. We thanked Him for what He had done and what He is going to do, no matter what the outcome...

His will be done.

There is a saying "It's not the fall that kills you, it's the sudden stop." Satan had violently shoved me over the edge and downward I fell, hard, fast and angry. It wasn't until I was willing to look to Jesus with a *grateful heart* that my fall ended, not with a sudden crash but with a soft embrace... right into the arms of Jesus.

Psalms 118:13

You pushed me violently so that I was falling, But the LORD helped me.

Colossians 3:17

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.



Who Am I?

By Amanda Seawright

Daughter, Sister, Aunt, Mother, Wife and Employee, etc. We could go on and on with our titles. But just as we have many titles and are many things to many people, so God is to us. He is our Savior, Father, Redeemer, Friend, Protector, Forgiver. He wants to be all of these and more. We sometimes feel like we are pulled in several different directions at once but that's when we need to depend on God. We need to allow Him to be all He wants to be for us.

As a woman, God has designed us to live through our hearts and that's why we need to let Him live in ours. We feel love, hurt and many emotions through our hearts. When our hearts get broken and shattered, we start to put up walls

to protect it and soon we have a heart of stone. We push everyone away letting them only get so close because we are afraid of being hurt again.

Jesus is standing there with outstretched arms saying, "Come here, my child! Let me heal you." There in that moment, we can either choose to let Jesus start to mend us, piece by piece, like putting a puzzle back together or live broken and in pain. Sometimes we need to be completely down so Jesus can build us back up like He wants us to be. He can make us into the woman we need to be and want to be.

We will be able to feel love, joy, pleasure, peace and true happiness. We need to pattern our lives after God and strive to be all we can be for Him. Only Jesus is

perfect but we should try our best to live a holy life so others will see Jesus in us.

So who are we? We are many things to many people, but most importantly we are children of God. When we are all we can be for God, then we will be the best we can be in every area of our lives!

Lord,

Help me to be all I can be for you! I give myself completely to You. Mold me and make me in your image. Thank You, Father! Amen

A Widow's Might: \$700—How Can Anyone Live on That?

By Mary Beth Oxendine

I'm living proof that you can live on \$700 a month; like in the Depression. We can be very resourceful. Christ is very faithful!

Net income a month: \$700.00

Housing: \$220.00, 30% of \$700

Utility Bills:

\$120.00 Duke Power

\$ 74.00 Water (we live in Central, one of highest in Pickens County)

\$ 26.00 House phone

My husband, Tom, believed you should not have your housing cost more than 40% of net or you are headed to bankruptcy. That includes your house payment. He believed, if possible, you don't depend on your wife's check for basic living—so that she can be home with the children. He also believed that you only buy a house you can pay off quickly.

Ours was paid off in our thirties. We lived simply and that is what I still follow. It makes life simpler and less stressful. He already knew this and lived this but when we did the Financial Freedom (by Jim Sammons, The Institute in Basic Life Principles), it reinforced it even more biblically. I've used this seminar to help me stay on track biblically since Tom's death. Because our closest friends also live out these same principles of God, it makes life easier. We all encourage each other!

I'm so thankful that Tom lived these biblical principles. Many widows have to move or lose their homes. Tom believed that debt was presuming on a future that we might not have. I'm thankful that he taught this to me. Tom believed very strongly that we as believers are to live our lives with excellence and that

includes financially to the glory of God. Sometimes, it was very tough and, at times, still is.

But when we obey Christ's Word, He does what He promises in His Word. And when we don't, there are consequences. I'm so thankful for Tom's faithfulness in living out Christ's instructions with our finances!! I had to repent and then turn completely around from thinking about what I need to live on. I had to face Christ and accept what He knows I need and then I work to adjust my lifestyle to fit it. It has taken much prayer to align myself with God's Word in how I should live with obedience with the money Christ has provided. Without grumbling or complaining but with a heart and mind of thanksgiving, we can bring Christ glory through our finances. Christ is faithful!



A Garden In The Wilderness: ...But God

By Sharon Hawkins

But God...why is it so hard?

But God...why another trial, I'm not through the last one yet?

But God...why don't these things happen to other people? Why is it so easy for them?

But God...why do bad things happen to good people?

But God...why does it seem sometime that the wicked prosper and the righteous go unrewarded?

But God...I don't want to give up those things. Why are you asking me to?

But God...why can't I have what I've been praying for?

But God...why won't you speak more clearly so I can understand?

But God...how much longer must I have to keep enduring this hard time I'm going through?

I may as well ask God those things because He knows if I'm thinking them. He's big enough, He's God! Then, although I don't deserve it, His love pours over me. His Word captures and pierces my heart. Then, in patience and loving kindness, His Holy Spirit bathes me in a warm balm of His wisdom, mercy and peace through His Word. In my quiet

time with Him, He reveals the answers to comfort my weary, questioning heart:

It might be hard and I might have trials... **BUT GOD** is always holding me tightly with His mighty right hand. *Psalm 63:8 says, "My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me."*

He reminds me in His Word, that *"From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place He watches all who live on earth—He who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do."* (Psalm 33:13-15) I may not see the battles others are fighting, ... **BUT GOD** sees and understands it all.

I have my human understanding, ... **BUT GOD** is God! *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.* (Isaiah 55:8)

The wicked only have the World, ... **BUT GOD** has provided an eternity for His Children. *John 3:18 says, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but He that believeth not is condemned already."*

I may not always know what's best for me, ... **BUT GOD** does! *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

It may not seem so, ... **BUT GOD** always answers prayers. Sometimes He answers, "Yes," sometimes "No," sometimes "Wait." But He always answers. *For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.* (Matthew 7:8)

Clarity?...Sometimes there's something wrong with my ears, ... **BUT GOD** has nothing wrong with His voice. *Be still and know that I am God.* (Psalm 46:1)

As far as how long I must endure, He's not going to take me out of the fire until He sees the gold He's working for. He loves me too much to leave me unchanged! *Philippians 1:6 says, "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

...BUT GOD!

Psalm 73:26

*My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.*

Hebrews 10:23

*Let us hold **unswervingly** to the hope
we profess, for He who promised is
faithful.*



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FOCUS SCRIPTURE VERSE:

Isaiah 43:19

...I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

Grace In The Wilderness is an out-reach ministry for Today's Busy Woman. Our mission is to encourage women of all ages:

- To look upward to God as they discover Him in a new and deeper way,
- To look inward as they discover who they are in Christ, and
- To look outward as they discover God's plan for their lives.

We appreciate your prayers and support. Donations are also appreciated and may be made payable to Grace In The Wilderness Ministries (address to the left).

This is a bi-monthly email newsletter. To subscribe for an electronic copy (free) or paper copy (\$10/year), please just call or email us.

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In The
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Conference for Teens
and College Age
Girls
October, 2011
Blue Ridge View
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God's promises are like the stars; the darker the night the brighter they shine. -David Nicholas

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